

MINNESOTA NRCS



William Hunt
State Conservationist



"Conservation is ethically sound. It is rooted in our love of the land, our respect for the rights of others, our devotion to the rule of law."

~Lyndon Baines Johnson

Minnesota NRCS has had another banner year of getting conservation on the land in Minnesota. Much of the success NRCS has had is due in part to the strong conservation partnerships that have been in existence since 1935.

Over the last few months, NRCS has again had several opportunities to showcase our conservation story with people from not only Minnesota but the rest of the nation.

Minnesota hosted the 3rd USDA Listening Session on August 3, 2005 at Farm Fest in Redwood County. To-date this has been the session with the most farmers attending, close to 1500 farmers came to the Listening Session.

August 29-31, 2005, Kasey Reed, ASTC-FO St. Peter and myself attended the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation. Glacial Ridge Tall-Grass Prairie Restoration, a Minnesota project, was one of 10 projects in the country highlighted at the conference. I was proud to represent NRCS at this historical event.

William Hunt

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USDA Farm Bill Listening Session Held in Minnesota

Morgan, Minnesota was the site of the Secretary of Agriculture's 3rd Farm Bill listening forum. Farmers from all over Minnesota flocked to the 24th Annual Farm Fest to hear the USDA Secretary speak and share their concerns and comments about the next farm bill. Each speaker was allotted a time frame of 2 minutes in which they could share their comments.



Ag Secretary Mike Johanns

When participating in the forums, the public is invited to respond to one or more of the following six questions. The format of the forum will also allow an open comment period for general Farm Bill comments.

1. How should farm policy address any unintended consequences and ensure that such consequences do not discourage new farmers and the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture.
2. How should farm policy be designed to maximize U.S. competitiveness and our country's ability to effectively compete in global markets?
3. How should farm policy be designed to effectively and fairly distribute assistance to producers?
4. How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?
5. How can Federal rural and farm programs provide effective assistance in rural areas?
6. How should agricultural produce development, marketing and research-related issues be addressed in the next farm bill?

The listening session took place between the hours of 4 p.m and 7 p.m. on Wednesday, August 3, 2005. The weather at the time of the event was in the upper 90's with sweltering humidity. Fortunately, the weather did not hamper the ability of the general public to attend the listening session.

Grass roots involvement is key when it comes to shaping what the next farm bill will be like in the year 2007. Hence, it is very important to include as many people as possible to lay the groundwork for the next farm bill!

Several NRCS employees assisted at the Farm Bill Forum including: *Kasey Reed, ASTC-FO, St. Peter, Yamika Stokes, DC, St. Peter,; Mike Appel, ASTC-FO, Marshall, James Ayres, ASTC-FO, Fergus Falls, William Hunt, State Conservationist and Julie MacSwain, Public Affairs Specialist.*

The public is also welcome to submit their comments via the USDA Farm Bill Forums website at: <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>. Throughout 2005, Johanns and other senior USDA officials will participate in the Farm Bill Forums that will continue to be held throughout the United States. The dates, locations and times of the forums will continue to be announced and will be posted on the USDA website.



Congressman Colin Peterson presents USDA Secretary Agriculture Mike Johanns with a coffee cup and shirt made from corn! L-R Congressman Colin Peterson, Congressman Gil Gutknecht, Lieutenant Governor Carol Molnau and USDA Secretary, Mike Johanns.

**Conservation
Planning and
Development
Training for
NRCS Summer
Students**



Minnesota NRCS recently conducted a Conservation Bus Tour for the new NRCS summer students. The tour occurred in Hennepin and Sherburne Counties. *Ed Musielewicz*, District Conservationist and *Timothy A. Wilson*, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations in Brooklyn Center served as the tour guides for the conservation tour.

The tour consisted of nine conservation tour stops and provided the students with a wide array of diverse conservation planning, conservation implementation and information about NRCS programs and services.



Ed Musielewicz, DC served as the tour guide for the Conservation Tour

"The farmer is a good farmer who, having enabled the land to support himself and to provide for the education of his children, leaves it to them a little better than he found it himself." President Roosevelt

**White House Conference on Cooperative
Conservation August 29-31, 2005**

William Hunt, State Conservationist and Kasey Reed, ASTC-FO St. Peter represented NRCS at the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation in St. Louis, MO. The Glacial Ridge Tall-Grass Prairie Restoration, a Minnesota project, was one of 10 projects in the country highlighted at the conference.

Case studies for the White House Cooperative Conservation Conference were chosen due to their outstanding conservation stewardship and cooperative conservation partnerships. Indeed, this was an honor for Minnesota NRCS.

In October of 2004, Glacial Ridge became the Nation's 545th National Wildlife Refuge. At its core is 24,000 acres that form the largest contiguous tallgrass prairie and wetland restoration project in the country. More than 30 conservation partners have played an active role in returning the land to its pre-settlement wetland's condition. When fully restored, the project will provide tremendous habitat for gray wolf, waterfowl, prairie chickens and other upland game birds, and a host of other prairie species.

At NRCS, cooperative conservation is all about helping people help the land. We know that those who depend upon the land to make their living have a vested interest in sound, sustainable stewardship.



Kasey Reed, ASTC-FO St. Peter explains the NRCS booth to Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns as Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Mark Rey (center) stands in background.

Sangeetha A. Gummadi, University of Minnesota at Twin Cities receives API Scholarship

Sangeetha Gummadi, Student Trainee Soil Conservationist became the recipient of the 2005 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Asian Pacific Islander (API) Scholars Program. The API Scholarship Program strengthens the partnership between NRCS and the Asian Pacific Islander community and also addresses NRCS workforce diversity needs. This scholarship provides an opportunity to study agriculture and related natural resource sciences, as well as giving the USDA the opportunity to recruit some of the brightest students of native heritage in the country.



Sangeetha is employed by the NRCS at the Area Office in Brooklyn Center. Congratulations Sangeetha on receiving this scholarship!

**NRCS State Office Employee Highlight
by Mao Thao**

I am the sixth child of eight in my family. My parents immigrated to the United States from a refugee camp in Thailand. My parents were never given the opportunity to receive an education. As a child, my parents always encourage me to do well in school. With their encouragement and love, I am the first generation to complete high school and attend college.

I am enrolled at Saint Paul College in Saint Paul. I am currently taking general education courses. Once I complete these courses I will transfer to the Carlson School of Management to study business management.

I have worked for the USDA-NRCS in Saint Paul for three years. I worked as a student intern for the administrative section and assisted my supervisor, *Laurie Otte*, with payments, purchases, and countless projects. Through this internship, I have gained experience and knowledge to develop my career. I hope to expand my career with the department and agency.



**L-R Mao Thao,
NRCS employee
received a**

scholarship from the Asian Pacific Islander Organization (APIO) President, Pooh Vongkhamdy at this summer's Annual Training Conference meeting. Congratulations, Mao Thao!

"Take care of the land and the land will take care of you." Hugh Hammond Bennett

**ALL CULTURAL APPRECIATION MONTH by
Amy Stratton**

The MN NRCS Civil Rights (CR) Committee worked with partners and volunteers to plan and implement the MN All Cultural Appreciation Month activity report for 2005. This report outlines the goal, methods, evaluation, dissemination and utilization, and the budget. The following section lists the goal of the event.

The goal of the All Cultural Appreciation Month activities is to provide MN NRCS employees and partners opportunities to learn about other cultures and to appreciate all cultures. In addition the MN NRCS CR Committee goals were to introduce the committee members and to provide a short training on how to handle a program discrimination complaint and an equal opportunity employment complaint.

A subcommittee of the CR Committee chose meeting locations and worked with our presenter, *Kathie Starkweather*, Sociologist, (formerly with USDA NRCS). The week of July 11th was chosen and the events were planned which were held throughout the State. *A special thank you to everyone who participated in our All Cultural Appreciation Month activities!*

Tessa Garcia, HEPM

Hispanic Heritage Month is September 16 – October 16, 2005. MN had 4 employees who entered the Hispanic Heritage Month Poster Contest for a chance to win \$250.00 and to have their poster become the 2005 NRCS Hispanic Heritage Month poster. *Susan Ploetz, Sandy Jerzak, Janine Milbrandt, and Michael Vasquez* all entered individual designs. Susan Ploetz poster design was chosen as this year's NRCS Hispanic Heritage Month poster. *Congratulations to Susan* and thank you to *Sandy, Janine, and Michael* for their entries. *Hebe Bernardo*, Engineer Intern in Brooklyn Center, returned back to Puerto Rico to finish school.

NEW NRCS State Office Employees

Allan Sommer has joined the Water Resources Staff, filling the position of Agricultural Economist. He comes to us from the Research Triangle Institute near Raleigh, North Carolina where he did model development, data analysis and interpretation of results for environmental and regulatory policy.

Tammy Egerstrom joined the State Office in June as a Contract Specialist. Tammy comes to us from the Corps of Engineers where she worked on contracting for construction projects throughout the St. Paul District.

Steve Muyskens returned to the State Office in May as Administrative Services Manager after working for almost a year at the Corps of Engineers as a Contracting Officer/Team Leader. Steve notes that while the type of work done by both the Corps and NRCS can be very similar (dams, levies, dredging, etc.), rules and regulations vary quite a bit between the two agencies.

Kay Burnison, our new HR Manager comes to our state with recent experiences from GSA in Kansas City, where Kay served as a Lead Human Resources Specialist, having responsibility for a team that did classification, recruitment/placement and employee/labor relations. She also was the lead for HR on A-76 studies, implementing Quickhire within the region. Kay has 2 daughters and a son plus 2 grandsons. She also has a daughter in Plano, TX, plus a grandson and granddaughter.

Bryan Welp, Budget Officer joins us from North Dakota. Bryan graduated from the University of North Dakota in his home state prior to joining the Air Force in 1998. After four years active duty as a Financial Management Officer, he took over as the Budget Officer for NRCS in North Dakota. Bryan and his wife Roberta live in Woodbury with their 15-month-old daughter Nora.

Irrigation Water Management Seminar by Sonia Jacobsen

On June 15, 2005, NRCS staff attended a seminar at the Central Lakes College Agricultural Center near Staples. The current EQIP docket includes Practice 449, Irrigation Water Management, which requires verification that a center pivot irrigation system is uniformly distributing the water over the cropped area. Jerry demonstrated how to set up



the cans (really plastic cups in wire brackets) under the center pivot system. After the system had irrigated the area for a time, the water amounts were determined, and a coefficient of uniformity calculated.



Dakota County Progressive Ag Tour was a Success by Michelle Wohlers

The first annual Dakota County Progressive Ag Tour was held on August 16, 2005 near Hastings. Local farmers, NRCS staff, certified crop advisors, and other partners were in attendance.

The main topic of discussion was in relation to the high level of nitrate levels in the Hasting area wells. Jerry Wright, University of Minnesota Extension Educator, was on hand to discuss Irrigation Management. Many landowners in the Hastings area have applied through the EQIP program to convert Irrigators to low pressure system irrigation coupled with Irrigation Water Management which requires the landowners to keep records of how much irrigation is being done, when it rains, and how much moisture their soil can hold.



After a morning of classroom information, a tour was held at the Al and George Schaffer farm in Miesville. For additional information about the Dakota County Progressive Ag Tour, please contact, Michelle Wohlers at (651)-463 8665.



**Minnesota's
first CSP signed on July 28, 2005**

The Tom and Theresa Loxtercamp signed Minnesota's First 2005 CSP Contract at a Conservation Security Program (CSP) signing ceremony on Thursday, July 28, 2005 near Sauk Centre. Over the last several years the Loxtercamp's have planned and successfully applied several conservation practices on their farm in rural Stearns County. Tom and Theresa Loxtercamp's farm is located within the Sauk Watershed and includes the following Central Minnesota counties: Parts of Douglas, Meeker, Pope, Stearns, and Todd.

The Loxtercamps farming operation consists of 50 milking Holstein cows. Their typical crop rotation consists of corn for grain and silage, alfalfa and tame hay land and small grains.



The 200 acre farm has 157 acres enrolled in CSP. The remaining acreage consists of woodland and grasslands managed primarily for wildlife. The Loxtercamps have owned and operated their farm since 1978.

Merlin Bartz, Regional Assistant Chief for the Central Region from USDA-NRCS served as the keynoter for the event. "CSP participants are conservation innovators. What they do today will lead to additional environmental benefits for the nation as they share their knowledge of conservation with others," said Bartz at the CSP event. A total of 564 CSP contracts were offered in Minnesota which translates into \$4,223,010 in long-term commitment to conservation over the next 10 year period.

Archeology in Houston County by Patrick McLoughlin, NRCS Archeologist

A series of Grade Stabilizations were to be implemented along Wildcat Creek near the town of Brownsville. The streambank contained about 6-7 feet of alluvium and required an archaeological survey. During the survey at one location, a lens of prehistoric cultural material was discovered in the cut bank about 1 meter below the surface. With the help of NRCS personnel, an excavation of a 1 x 1 meter unit was initiated. The excavation recovered cultural material from 50 centimeters down to 1.1 meters and suggested that this location had been occupied repeatedly over thousands of years. One intact cultural feature containing a cache of flaked pieces of chert (i.e. blanks), was encountered at 95 centimeters. Caches are fairly common in the archaeological record and were purposely left there and stashed with the intent of retrieving them at some later point in time.

Prior to construction, additional work was needed in order to meet Section 106 requirements and to determine if the site was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Two backhoe trenches were excavated through the site after the spring thaw in order to get a comprehensive view of the site's stratigraphy and to look for

additional buried features. A-7 Soil Scientist, John Beck, helped examine trench profiles. Samples of wood charcoal associated with artifacts were collected from 1.2 and 1.6 meters below the surface. These samples were submitted for Radiocarbon dating and yielded interesting results. The samples taken from 1.2 meters were dated at 5500-5700 years BP (BP = Before Present). The samples collected from 1.6 meters yielded dates close to 8,000 years BP.



Cache of bifacial blanks

Lyon SWCD and the NRCS Conservation Tour and Anniversary

Lyon SWCD and the NRCS FO in Marshall sponsored a Conservation Tour on July 28, 2005. Lyon SWCD celebrated it's 60th Anniversary while the NRCS joined in to celebrate it's 70th Anniversary! Close to 150 people came to Lyon County to participate in the celebratory activities.



The July 28, 2005 itinerary was as follows:
8 a.m. - 9 a.m. - Registration for the tour. An Open House along with refreshments were provided.
9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. A morning tour took place throughout western and southern Lyon County,
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Lunch and exhibits at Garvin Park.
1 p.m. - 3 p.m. An afternoon tour throughout central and eastern Lyon County.



Gary Brinks, a Murray County SWCD supervisor, and Howard Konkol, Lyon's SWCD district manager, said the tour was a good way for the Lyon County agencies to show its projects.

As the buses traveled throughout the county, the guests were reminded that conservation projects provide several benefits.

The morning tour provided the tour guests with a viewing of 27 projects and the afternoon conservation bus tour included 32 projects.

A special thank you to the following people and organizations that made this Conservation Anniversary possible.



Lyon SWCD Staff and Supervisors; Mike Appel, NRCS; Sandy Jerzak, NRCS; Jim Doering and the RCRC Staff; Terry Renken and Cindy Potz, Yellow Medicine River Watershed District; Kerry Netzke, Area II; Sharon Root, Lyon county Environmental office; Julie Isenberg, Environmental Health and the Area Office Engineering and Soils Staff, NRCS.



Grazefest Minnesota Deemed a Success!

Mary Jo and Luverne Forbord of rural Starbuck were hosts of the first ever Grazefest Minnesota, an educational and eating extravaganza that celebrated one of the most up-and-coming conservation practices, known as rotational grazing, management intensive grazing, or prescribed grazing. Close to 120 people attended the event on Saturday, August 13, 2005. Attendees came from all over Minnesota and adjoining states.



Grazefest Minnesota was sponsored by: Sustainable Farming Association of MN, NRCS, MN Department of Agriculture, Energy and Sustainable g Program, Minnesota Farmers Union, Ag Resource Consulting, Organic Land Management and the University of Minnesota. Grazefest is a service mark of *"Eating Fresh Publications."*

Jim Gerrish, Independent Grazing Consultant from Idaho, spoke on "Improving Pasture Nutrition and Your Bottom Line." Jim Gerrish pointed out that "It just makes sense to work on improving your bottom line in farming. It is important to know what the costs are involved in farming." Gerrish felt there was a need to develop mentoring guidance for young farmers wanting to get into the business of grazing on the land.



Mary Jo Forbord, Executive Director of the Sustainable Farming Association of MN and co-host of Grazefest Minnesota, said "We were pleased to provide the setting for so many farmer/ graziers, grazing specialists and grazing resources to meet and sharpen the cutting edge of grazing expertise in Minnesota. The Pasture Walk allowed Grazefest attendees to experience a grazing system in depth, ask questions in a small group led by grazing specialists, and compare notes with other graziers along the way. For more information about Grazing in Minnesota, contact Howard Moechnig via e-mail at: howard.moechnig@mn.usda.gov



*Always do your best.
What you plant now, you will harvest later.*

- Og Mandino

NRCS Employees Impacted by Hurricane Kutrina

Two Minnesota NRCS employees were impacted by the recent Hurricane, Kutrina. Patrick McLoughlin, Archaeologist in the NRCS State Office and Lakelle Pritchett, Civil Engineer, who arrived to St. Peter on August 22, 2005, just a few days before the Hurricane hit the Gulf Coast. Lakelle recently came from Southern University of Baton Rouge.



L-R Cutrina Moreland, Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator presents Pat McLoughlin with a contribution of items from Area 7.

The NRCS family in Minnesota has helped in several ways. Employees have been sharing clothing and various house goods with the McLoughlin family. On September 15, the State Office Employee's Association (EA) held a Potluck gathering for Pat McLoughlin and his family. Over the course of the last few weeks, employees from the NRCS State Office and other Federal agencies in the Farm Credit Building have banded together to obtain donations for the McLoughlin family.



Patrick McLoughlin, Archaeologist with his Nephew from St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana

Over the last few weeks the family has experienced a great deal of goodness from so many people that they do not know. Currently, Pat and his wife Jen are housing many of Patrick's family in their Cottage Grove home.

A special thank you to *Cutrina Moreland, Susan Ploetz and Kasey Reed* and the entire NRCS family for their extra effort in helping out the NRCS family impacted by Hurricane Kutrina.

Additionally, the NRCS family has reached out to Lakelle's family.



Several boxes of clothing and other items have been delivered to the St. Peter Area office. Lakelle's family is currently living in the Houston area. Lakelle was recently asked to speak at the Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN to share her relative's experiences from the recent aftermath of the flood.

Federal Emergency Management Agency Community Relations Program

NRCS employees have the opportunity to assist the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in providing a framework for supporting aid to the local communities which were affected by Hurricane Kutrina. FEMA has put forth a request for an immediate registry of volunteers to assist with subsequent recovery efforts. While there are no specific skills required to participate, volunteers should be available when called upon and willing and able to work long hours and walk for extended periods of time in carrying out assigned tasks.

NRCS employees who were interested in helping out were to respond by September 17, 2005 to *Ann English*, ASTC-Operations in the NRCS State Office.

Conservation Security Program (CSP) Blue Earth Watershed Tour

On September 20, 2005, a group of Minnesota NRCS employees, conservation partners, members of the Minnesota State Technical Committee, and members of the general public participated in a tour of the CSP Blue Earth Watershed. The CSP tour was sponsored by the MN Natural Resources Conservation Service, Three Rivers RC&D, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program and the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

We want to extend a special thank you to all individuals who played a role in the planning and successful implementation of the tour. The tour provided the participants with the opportunity to visit producers with current CSP contracts within the Blue Earth CSP Watershed. Additionally, the participants were able to ask questions of the CSP program participants and agency personnel who are responsible for rolling out the CSP program in the State.

While traveling between each site, several individuals representing various groups within Minnesota informed the participants of conservation opportunities and activities. The District Conservationists and District employees educated the participants on current agricultural statistics for the counties within the Blue Earth Watershed and current and past conservation activities. They also gave brief overviews of the agricultural operations that were part of the tour.

The first stop took place at Edgewood Farms on the southern edge of Vernon Center, MN. This is a 3rd generation farm which grows corn and soybeans. This farm has also been enrolled in CRP and the EQIP program. CSP Stewardship Practices contained in the Edgewood farms contract include: Conservation Crop Rotation, Residue Management and Nutrient Management. Additional CSP activities include the application of manure, managing the timing of nutrients, pest management, conservation tillage, current soil testing and wildlife habitat improvement.

**Ernie the farm
donkey and
Kasey Reed**



The 2nd CSP tour stop occurred at J-Ace Farms, Inc. Jim Erdahl is currently the President. Crops grown on J-Ace Farms include a corn and soybean rotation. A total of 1948.4 acres are operated by J-Ace Farms (823.7 acres owned and 1124.7 rented). CSP Stewardship practices on J-Ace Farms include Conservation Crop Rotation and Residue Management. Some of the CSP Enhancement practices contained in J-Ace's farm contract include applying fertilizer at or below agronomic rates; Soil Tillage Intensity Ratings (STIR); and spring pre-plant commercial nitrogen fertilizer application.

The 3rd CSP tour stop took place at the Archie and Denise Kluender farm in Foster Township, Blue Earth County. This is a 3rd generation farm and has been in the family for 98 years. In 1994, Archie started transitioning into organic farming. Since 1980, the Kluender's have been implementing several conservation practices on their land, including: grass waterways, field windbreaks, shelterbelts, and other conservation practices to reduce erosion and improve water quality. Archie felt the biggest challenge he faced when converting to organic production was overcoming his preconceived notions of agriculture. He stated that "if you commit your mind to a change, anything is possible".

The Kluender's grow the following organic crops: corn, soybeans, alfalfa, buckwheat, hairy vetch, and winter rye. CSP practices contained on the Kluender farm include utilizing a conservation crop rotation, cover crop, field border, and windbreak/shelter belts.

The CSP tour gave participants the opportunity to visit and discuss CSP with true stewards of the land. *A special thank you goes to the three farm families for opening up their farms to the tour and for their continued conservation and commitment to environmental improvements in Minnesota.*



**William Hunt
presents Denise and Archie Kluender with a token of
appreciation!**

"Soil erosion is as old as agriculture. It began when the first heavy rain struck the first furrow turned by a crude implement of tillage in the hands of prehistoric man. It has been going on ever since, wherever man's culture of the earth has bared the soil to rain and wind"

— Hugh H. Bennett and W.C. Lowdermilk, circa 1930's

AREA 1

Glen A. Kajewski, ASTC(FO), Thief River Falls, MN

The Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians requested technical and financial assistance in 2005 by submitting an application to participate in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). The purpose of the application is to aid the Red Lake Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with several resource concerns that have been identified. The application this year addresses several concerns related to forestry, wildlife, and water quality.

The forestry practices are a continuation of efforts to assist the Band with an aggressive re-forestation plan for the reservation. Practices such as 338 Prescribed Burning and 490 Forest Site Preparation are planned to help prepare approximately 500 acres for future tree planting opportunities under the 612 Tree / Shrub

Establishment practice. An additional 250 acres is planned for an aerial seeding over the next two years.

Practice 666 Forest Stand

Improvement will be used on approximately 580 acres on tree plantings established under previous EQIP contracts.



The 338 Prescribed Burning practice in this contract will be primarily utilized to help enhance an oak savannah project the Reservation has been working on for several years. The available EQIP dollars will allow the Band to

complete a burn on approximately 1600 acres. The Red Lake DNR has a certified prescribed burning technician on staff to write and administer the entire burn plan.

Plans are to utilize the 645 Upland Wildlife Habitat practice to help establish a newly renovated nesting cover area along one of the many wetland restoration sites that exist on the Reservation. Approximately 80 acres will be established into a prairie grass – legume – forb mix to enhance the nesting potential for the thousands of waterfowl that visit the Reservation each year.

PERSONNEL:

Promotions:

Jeff Rypka, Civil Engineer - Thief River Falls Area Office, promotion effective 8/7/2005.

Matt Baltes, GIS Specialist - Thief River Falls Area Office, promotion effective September 4, 2005.



AREA 1

Glen A. Kajewski, ASTC(FO), Thief River Falls, MN

Awards:

Danny Thorstad, SCT - Warren FO, was awarded a Time off Award for making the Area 1 plant materials tour a success. Danny was asked by this year's committee to help with this year's tour and came through with flying colors. He finalized all the stops, did the dry run for time-line, lined up the county park for lunch and made all landowner contacts.

Roy Holmes, CET - Thief River Falls, was awarded a NRCS flashlight for his prompt assistance in measuring the slope of the Red Lake Falls FO handicapped ramp to ensure compliance.

The SCEP/STEP trainees have completed a successful summer of training and have reported back to school.

Candi Fuller

Michael Douglas

Patrick Sievert

Kristen Graham

Kevin Gietzen

Matt Waterworth

Shannon Rasinski

Dan Pazdernik

Nate Emery

Congratulations to the following Area 1 employees who have recently married:

Krystal Leonhardt, SCT - Bemidji FO, married Jesse on September 17th, 2005 in Bemidji.

Matt Baltes, GIS specialist - Thief River Falls FO, married Stacy on September 3, 2005 in Bemidji.

Jeff Rypka, Civil Engineer - Thief River Falls AO, married Pernilla on August 12, 2005 in Sweden.

AREA 2

James R. Ayres, ASTC(FO), Fergus Falls, MN

EAGLE LAKE PARK RENOVATION

Eagle Lake Park experienced a facelift. The park is near Frazee in Becker County and was experiencing erosion near the boat ramp and swimming area due to foot traffic, water runoff from uphill, and snowmobile and 4-Wheeler activity during the winter. Draft plans for shoreline erosion were drawn up by Jeff Haverland, engineer of the West Central Joint Powers Board. After two years of planning, on June 1st the shoreline was reshaped. Becker County Sentence to Serve, Jeff Norby, NRCS, Don Lefebvre, director with WesMin RC&D, Dean Schmidt, Coordinator with WesMin RC&D, and Brad Grant, Becker County SWCD district manager worked with shovels to dig holes, roll rocks into the proper positions, and laid mulch. Grasses and wild flowers were planted in the mulch and Hansen's Hedge Roses along the cedar rail fence. Although much was accomplished there is another phase yet to go. The boat ramp has to be upgraded—this is planned for next year. People rallied around the project by donating time and money. Money from Becker SWCD (\$2,577) donations from Arvig Communication Services and



Turn in Poachers contributed significant amounts and local companies made donations as well. The cooperation between the city of Frazee, the Burlington Township, Sentence to Serve, Becker County SWCD, West Central Joint Powers Board, NRCS, WesMin RC&D, and others too numerous to list made this project come together.

AREA 2

James R. Ayres, ASTC(FO), Fergus Falls, MN

PERSONNEL:

Jon Sellnow, Soil Conservationist, Detroit Lakes Field Office will be transferred to the Preston Field Office effective October 2, 2005. We wish Jon luck at his new location.

Joyce Mayer, Soil Conservation Technician, Fergus Falls Field Office, retired effective August 31, 2005. She will be missed.

Mark Mason, Soil Conservation Technician, Perham Field Office has been selected for a transfer to Easton, Maryland, effective October 2, 2005. He will be missed. Good Luck!

Ron Spiering, Soil Conservationist, joined the Morris Field Office staff May 31, 2005. Welcome.

Adam Martinson was hired by the Morrison County SWCD as a summer intern. He will be returning to St. Cloud State this September.

William Marken, GIS Specialist, Fergus Falls Area Office was promoted August 21, 2005. Congratulations!!

Robert Honeman, Area Resource Conservationist, Fergus Falls Area Office, received a Non-monetary Award for his leadership role as the Redeye Watershed Coordinator and for the successful implementation and administration of the CSP Program.

Bruce Becker, District Conservationist; *Mark Mason*, Soil Conservation Technician; and *Cheryl Isder*, Soil Conservationist, in the Perham Field Office received Non-monetary Awards for the successful implementation and administration of the new CSP Program which led to obtaining and securing 50 newly approved landowner contracts.

James Fritz, District Conservationist; *Darlene Drayna*, Soil Conservation Technician, and *Steve Lutes*, Nutrient Management Specialist, in the Long Prairie Field Office received Non-monetary Awards for the successful implementation and administration of the new CSP Program which led to obtaining and securing 29 newly approved landowner contracts.

Dave Aldeen, District Conservationist and *Ivan Reinke*, Soil Conservation Technician in the Wadena Field Office received Non-monetary Awards for the successful implementation and administration of the new CSP Program which led to obtaining and securing 19 newly approved landowner contracts.

Mark Dybdal, District Conservationist, Alexandria Field Office, received a Non-monetary Award for the successful implementation and administration of the new CSP Program which led to obtaining and securing 10 newly approved landowner contracts.

George Zimmerman, District Conservationist, Detroit Lakes Field Office, received a Non-monetary Award for the successful implementation and administration of the new CSP Program which led to obtaining and securing one newly approved landowner contracts.

Craig Bower, District Conservationist, Glenwood Field Office, received a Non-monetary Award for the successful implementation and administration of the new CSP Program which led to obtaining and securing two newly approved landowner contracts.

Plant Herbivore Training in Utah

Marge Sella, District Conservationist from the Virginia Field Office and *John Zinn*, Grazing Specialist recently attended the Plant Herbivore Interaction training held at Utah State University in Logan, Utah from June 14-23.

John Zinn said "We learned that animals are hardwired to develop taste preferences and aversions based on post digestive feedback and social interactions with their mothers and peers. If an animal eats a new food and has a negative gastric experience there is an unconscious response in the animal to avoid that food even if peers and the mother eat the food. It is the same situation as getting food poisoning from a particular food and then being nauseated by just smelling the food even though it is perfectly ok."

The daily schedule included a morning laboratory session in which the participants were divided into groups. Marge's team gave a fruit flavored drink to a group of lambs that had a diet that was slightly low in energy. One group received a grape flavored drink sweetened with sugar and an orange flavored drink sweetened with saccharin. The other group received a grape flavored drink sweetened with saccharin and an orange flavored drink sweetened with sugar. Each group learned to associate the flavor with the nutritional value. The group that had the orange flavor associated with the nutritional value of the sugar learned to select the orange flavor and the group that had the sugar in the grape flavor learned to select grape.



Marge watering her lambs during a morning experiment session.

John's group illustrated that most animals will gradually increase their intake of a nutritious novel food and that they will decrease intake when the flavor of a familiar food changes. They began by giving the sheep a known amount of a new food (rice) for a set amount of time each day, the rice was then weighed to determine the amount eaten. One day they gave the sheep a familiar food (barley) and measured intake. The next day the barley was mixed with a flavoring and intake observed and measured. They ate less when it was flavored.

Personnel News

Mike Oja, Acting DC, Aitkin FO, effective 07/05/05.
Aaron Peter, Agricultural Engineer, Area Office, transferred to NRCS, Little Rock, AR, effective 07/22/05.

Jessica Bronson, Soil Conservationist, transferred to Area 7, effective 08/08/05.

Bart Roepke, WAE, Hinckley Field Office, resigned 08/24/05.

Casey Schroeder, selected as Project Leader, International Falls SSO, EOD 09/06/05.

Tim Byrns, DC, North Branch FO, resigned 09/09/05.

AREA 3

B. Kevin Daw, ASTC(FO), Duluth, MN

Gary A. Schmiedlin,

age 54 of
Barron, passed
away on
Sunday, July
17, 2005. He
was born on
April 21, 1951,
in Madison, WI,
the son of



Willard and Elinor
(Arneson) Schmiedlin. He grew up in Madison and
graduated from Madison East High School. He
graduated from UW-River Falls with a bachelors of
science degree. He has worked as a soil
conservationist for more than 30 years in
Wisconsin and Minnesota. On Aug. 23, 1975, he
married Ruth Ovsak at River Falls. She preceded
him in death on Feb. 24, 1993. He later married
Jackie Leonhard on Aug. 19, 1995, at Tony. Gary
was very active in the Barron Boy Scouts Troop 6.
He enjoyed fishing, camping and hunting. He also
enjoyed farming and was an avid gardener. Gary
liked to go traveling. He attended St. Joseph's
Catholic Church, Barron. He is survived by his wife,
Jackie of Barron; mother, Elinor Schmiedlin of
Madison; son, Brian Schmiedlin of Barron;
daughter, Teresa Schmiedlin of La Crosse; step-
son, Nick Mauthe of Marquette, Mich.; step-
daughter, Stephanie Mauthe of Marquette, Mich.;
and brothers, Robert Schmiedlin of Baraboo, and
Wayne Schmiedlin (Brother) of Sun Prairie. He was
preceded in death by his first wife; his father; and a
brother, William Schmiedlin.

Gary's friends and colleagues in Minnesota
assembled a photo CD for Gary's family. We
shared highlights of Gary's professional and social
activities from his tenure in Minnesota. Memorial
funds were also provided to assist with
construction of a picnic pavilion at a Boy Scout
camp in Wisconsin. We will miss him.

AREA 4

Timothy A. Wilson, ASTC(FO), Brooklyn Center, MN

BioBlitz a blast of fun on the Mississippi River

Heron, Bald Eagles, Muskie, Channel Catfish,
British Soldiers, big and small we saw it all. Old
man River revealed its secrets to young and old
on Saturday, September 10th at the Mississippi
River BioBlitz. Approximately 200 people visited
the Mississippi River Park north of Sartell to enjoy
the event.

The BioBlitz attracted approximately 200 people,
and is part scientific and part cultural event. The
event was in full swing by 10:00 when the Raptor
Center introduced Maxine the Bald Eagle and
other raptors to delighted children. Boat rides,
sponsored by the Minnesota Department of
Natural Resources were led by two 'electrofishing'
boats and accompanied by four passenger boats.
Sixty-five people accompanied the DNR boats to
help count fish species found in the river.

Artists also joined the riverfront event with an
outdoor display of bathroom and kitchen fixtures.
The fixtures were connected by piping that visually
"emptied" into the river to make a complete
connection between human use of water and the
river.

Scientists led hikes around the BioBlitz basecamp
site, Mississippi River Park in Stearns County,
and around the new Bend in the River park across
the River in Benton County. Specialists in plants,
mammals, birds, insects, and invertebrates
identified over 200 different species during the
day. Accompanied by event participants,
scientists and lay people alike found out what lives
in their "backyard."

AREA 4

Timothy A. Wilson, ASTC(FO), Brooklyn Center, MN

The BioBlitz was sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District, the Stearns Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Mid-Minnesota Mississippi Resource Conservation and Development Corp. The BioBlitz is part of the Mississippi River Renaissance project that is focusing attention on the 20-mile stretch of the Mississippi River from the Blanchard Dam on the north to St. Cloud in the south. A comprehensive natural resources inventory of this larger area is also underway.

Personnel:

Darren Carlson was hired as Soil Conservation Technician at Jordan effective August 7, 2005

Rich Biske, Habitat/Greenways Coordinator at Anoka SWCD recently accepted a position with the Natural Conservatory in SE Minnesota.

Josh Williams is the new Habitat/Greenways Coordinator for Anoka SWCD.

Karl Hammers was hired as Resource Conservationist for Wright SWCD, effective September 6, 2005.

Luke Johnson was hired as District Technician for Wright SWCD effective September 12, 2005

AREA 5

Michael D. Appel, ASTC(FO), Marshall, MN

Lazarus Creek and Del Clark Dedication July 7, 2005



On July 7, 2005 a dedication occurred at Lazarus Creek and Del Clark . The dedication of these projects was not only important for the residents of SW Minnesota but also for the visitors that come to these sites in SW Minnesota.

Partners gathered together on July 7th to show their appreciation for these completed projects. The Area Office in Marshall and the NRCS State Office worked hard over the last several years to make this project become reality.

Lazarus Creek, a tributary to the Lac qui Parle River in Yellow Medicine County of western Minnesota, drains to the Minnesota River and is the site of the Lazarus Creek Floodwater Control Project. The purpose of this project is to control runoff from a 21.2 square mile drainage area west of Canby, Minnesota. The project consisted of an earthen dam with a maximum height of 62 feet and 1,350 feet in length. A two-stage outlet works comprised of a 48-inch reinforced concrete pipe on channel grade and a concrete weir inlet located 40 feet above the pipe. A vegetated, earthen emergency spillway to prevent dam overtopping. The "dry dam" stores approximately 1,950 acre-feet of runoff from any 100-year storm event.

AREA 5

Michael D. Appel, ASTC(FO), Marshall, MN

The Canby Creek Watershed is located in western Yellow Medicine County with a small portion of the watershed located in Lincoln County.

During the fall of 2001, Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District approached the NRCS on the possibility of adding facilities to provide people with disabilities with access to the lake for fishing. The project consisted of three major components. A designated parking area consisting of three van-accessible parking lanes for people with disabilities; Installation of a floating fishing pier on Del Clark Lake; and the installation of concrete pathways between the parking area, restrooms, fishing pier, and picnic pad.



L-R, William Hunt, Lou Ann Nagel, Willis Beecher and Mike Appel

For additional information about either Lazarus Creek or the Del Clark project, please contact Paul Bridgeland, Area Engineer in Marshall. Paul can be reached at (507)-537-0541 or via e-mail at: paul.bridgeland@mn.usda.gov.

JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2005 CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

Personnel News

Non-monetary spot awards were given for the 70th Anniversary tour.

Jamie Thomazin, DC Marshall
Mike Timmerman, SCT Marshall
Janine Milbradt, Soil Sc. Marshall
Ray Genrich, Soil Sc. Marshall
Beth Collins, GIS spec. Marshall
Lance Smith, Grazing spec. Marshall
Sandra Jerzak, AAC Marshall
Vonnie Nilges, Acct. Tech. Marshall
Mark Rose, Res. Cons. Marshall
Paul Bridgland, A.E. Marshall
Gary Blough, C.E. Marshall
Cal Dunblazier, CET Marshall
Mike Nienaber, ARC Marshall

Staff Update

Mike Timmerman new SCT in Marshall
Josh Bork, SC in Marshall
4 student trainees returned to school

AREA 6

Kasey L. Reed, ASTC(FO), St. Peter, MN

Leadership Program by Steve Becker

Jason Sickmann, Pooh Vongkhamdy, Kasey Reed, and Steve Becker recently graduated from the 2005 Midwest Leadership Development Program. There were 25 participants from seven states who participated in the 18 month program.

Participants made one trip to the former Regional Office in Madison, Wisconsin and two trips to Washington, DC. The Leadership Development participants organized a National Leadership Conference, attended the Capitol Hill Workshop, and participated in MN ASTC(FO) Meetings. Additionally, each participant completed a special project which was key to developing and demonstrating their leadership skills. The graduation ceremony was held in Champaign, Illinois on May 25.



L-R Ron Williams, Kasey Reed, Jason Sickmann and Steve Becker at the Leadership graduation ceremony in Champaign, Illinois.

Minnesota NRCS has supported the Leadership Program since its inception in 2000. NRCS employees who are interested in learning more about the Leadership Program are encouraged to contact recent Graduates of the 2005 Leadership program. *Jason Sickmann, Pooh Vongkhamdy, Kasey Reed, and Steve Becker. All of these employees work with NRCS in Area 6!*

Personnel News

Area 6 has two new employees.

Lakelle Pritchett, Ag Engineer, St. Peter AO, began on August 22, 2005.

Lisa Buckner, DC, Glencoe, began on July 11, 2005.

AREA 7

John T. Nicholson, ASTC(FO), Rochester, MN

RC&D's go "Down Under" at Summer Meeting

The Minnesota Association of RC&D's (MARCD) this year held their annual summer meeting not in Australia but in Rochester, MN at the Ramada on August 30 and 31st, 2005.

The theme was learning about the Karst topography in Minnesota's southeast in the Hiawatha Valley RC&D area. To fully understand the sensitive Karst topography, an area underlain by limestone, sandstone and shale deposits that allows groundwater to move directly through it. A field tour of SE Minnesota was held for RC&D council members and NRCS coordinators and assistants. "Sinkholes" were looked at, or holes in the ground that tap directly into underground streams and rivers. To see what happens to water as it moves underground through the Karst limestone and underlying rock, participants went "down under" and completed tours of the "Mystery Cave." The evening of August 30th was the awards banquet and story telling by Michael Cotter.

A group of RC&D council members and NRCS employees and their spouses enjoy a "Mystery Cave" Tour held on August 30th, 2005.





Minnesota NRCS Marketing Committee

During FY 2005, the MN NRCS Marketing Committee became involved in several projects and activities which benefited all of the employees for MN NRCS and its conservation partnership.

A special thank you to John Nicholson, ASTC-FO Rochester, Minnesota who served as Chairperson for the Marketing Committee during FY 2005.

FY 2005 MN NRCS Marketing Committee Members:

John Nicholson, ASTC-FO, Chair
Karen Buckley-Washington, A7 Public Affairs Specialist
Julie MacSwain, Public Affairs Specialist
Mary Monte, District Conservationist
Susan Ploetz, Web Master
Kasey Reed, ASTC-FO
Dean Schmidt, RC&D Coordinator

Your support during FY 2005 was appreciated! If you have suggestions on activities the marketing committee should be working on in FY 2006, please contact any committee member for sharing your input!

JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2005 CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

Landcare

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Click in on publications and proceed to view and see what is available from the Landcare Office in Des Moines, Iowa. Items are shipped directly to your office.

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Send Your Contributions to:

Julie MacSwain, MN Public Affairs Specialist
julie.macswain@mn.usda.gov
(651) 602-7859

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